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San Diego Police honors fallen Marine

Story by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The San Diego Police Department posthumously named a Camp Pendleton, Calif., Marine as an honorary police officer Monday at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar’s Bob Hope Theater.

The Marine was awarded this honor for valiant actions in Iraq as he used his own body to shield his fellow Marines from an insurgent’s grenade.

Sgt. Rafael Peralta, an infantryman with Company A, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, always wanted to become a San Diego police officer when he left the Marine Corps. Unfortunately, Peralta died November 15, 2004, during combat operations in Fallujah.

The San Diego resident was the first of six Marines to kick open the door of an old urban house only to be met by three insurgents, each carrying automatic rifles.

The insurgents immediately began firing and hit Peralta multiple times in the upper torso and head. Peralta still managed to swing open the door so his fellow Marines could have a clear shot at the insurgents.

As Peralta lay on the ground, a yellow oval shaped object bounced near his almost lifeless body. In an act of heroism, Peralta grabbed the grenade and stuck it under his body to shield his fellow Marines from the blast.

Although Peralta lost his life that day, his actions and his spirit will be remembered forever.

“I’m proud of what he did that day and I am still proud today,” said Rosa Peralta, Rafael’s mother.

William Lansdowne, chief of police for



Rosa Peralta (left), mother of Sgt. Rafael Peralta, stands with William Lansdowne, chief of police, San Diego Police Department, April 24, at the Bob Hope Theater, as her son was posthumously awarded the title of San Diego police officer. Photo by Sgt. Jessica L. Grear

the SDPD, spoke out in Peralta’s memory as he was awarded the badge.

“We would have hired him the second he left the United States Marine Corps,” said Lansdowne. “He had the dedication and courage to do great things, and he also believed in what this great country is all about.”

Lansdowne mentioned in his speech that Rafael kept a Declaration of Independence in his room that he read to himself every night. He read this to remind himself of the decisions he made to join the military and to fight for his

country.

Rafael also wrote a note to his 15-year-old brother the day before he died. The note read, “Ricardo, be proud, be proud to be an American.”

Rosa Peralta was accompanied by Col. Paul C. Christian, commanding officer, MCAS Miramar, as she was given these awards and applause for her son’s heroic actions.

As the men and woman attending the ceremony stood up to applaud the actions of Peralta, Rosa could not help but weep, holding her son’s awards.

Hagee recognizes Miramar for safety

Story by Lance Cpl. Scott T. McAdam Jr.
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

As announced in a recent All Marine Message 016/06, the commandant awarded Marine Corps Air Station Miramar with the Marine Corps Achievement in Safety Award.

“This is the second time in three years that Miramar’s safety programs have been recognized for what they are, programs, policies, attitudes and leadership on everyone’s part to protect the force,” said Col. Paul C. Christian, commanding officer, MCAS Miramar.

The Marine Corps Achievement in Safety Award is an accolade under the directive of the Commandant of the Marine Corps and is presented annually on a fiscal year basis to the one Marine Corps command in each group that

has established the most outstanding safety program. The award includes a citation signed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps and a commemorative wall plaque.

MCAS Miramar has a record of safety. The air station hired four civilian tactical safety specialists who provide safety support to deployable units.

One is currently with the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) and another is scheduled to be deployed this summer, said Linda B. Jackowski, supervisor specialist, safety office, MCAS Miramar.

MCAS Miramar also won the Department of the Navy 2003 Safety Excellence Award, Secretary of the Navy fiscal year 2002 and 2003 for Achievement in Safety Ashore (large non-industrial activity) and the Marine Corps Merit Award in Safety fiscal year 2003.

FLIGHT JACKET



Maj. Gen. Samuel T. Helland
Commanding General
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing



Col. Paul C. Christian
Commanding Officer
MCAS Miramar

Maj. Jason A. Johnston
Public Affairs Director

Capt. Al Eskalis
Public Affairs Deputy Director

Gunnery Sgt. Matthew L. Sewell
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Military, families eligible for online mental health screening

USMC Press Release

HQMC

WASHINGTON – Military members and families coping with the stress of overseas deployments and other potential health-threatening issues can go to the Internet to get help, according to a U.S. military psychologist.

Service members from all components and their families can obtain a mental health self-assessment or screening through a Web site co-sponsored by Department of Defense and Screening for Mental Health Inc., a nonprofit organization, said Air Force Col. Joyce Adkins, a psychologist with the Force Health Protection and Readiness directorate at the Defense Department's Health Affairs office.

“The (online) screening actually gets you to where you need to be in terms of counseling,” Adkins said. “Once you do one of the screening checklists, it will give you the benefits that are available to you.”

The Web site, activated in January, augments other DoD mental health assistance resources, Adkins said. People logged onto the site are asked to answer a series of questions. The program “grades” the completed survey, Adkins said, and gives people an evaluation of their present mental health and provides assistance resources, if deemed necessary.

sary.

Other DoD-endorsed health sites tell customers how to access mental health counseling services, but do not provide an online mental health screening program, Adkins said.

National Guard and Reserve members returning from overseas deployments also are authorized to use the Web site, Adkins said. Returning reserve-component members have two years of health benefits provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“And, it’s totally free to them,” the colonel pointed out.

Such services are especially important today, Adkins said, because of the potential stressful effects deployments can have on both military and family members. “It’s a concern that people don’t understand what their thoughts and feelings mean as they come back from deployment,” Adkins said. “As they re-integrate with their families there may be conflict in the family that’s not easily resolved.”

The mental health screening Web site and other related programs available to service members and their families provide “a level of benefits and a level of service to help them understand what services are available to them for mental health issues,” Adkins said.

DUI incidents increase aboard Miramar

Story by Lance Cpl. Robert W. Beaver

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Since the beginning of the new year, the total number of DUIs at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar have reached almost half of the number of incidents during the entire year of 2005. If this trend continues, the total number of incidents may be well over last year’s numbers.

Roughly one-fourth of this year’s DUIs have involved minors.

The 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing has had many squadrons return within the last several months, which may be the cause for the high amount of DUIs, according to Sgt. Robert L. Coffman, accident investigations chief, MCAS Miramar.

“Marines work at a high operational tempo during deployment,” said Coffman, a 34-year-old native of Perkins, Okla. “When they return they often find themselves with extra time on their hands and too much

money, so they resort to drinking.”

Some Marines decide to leave base to enjoy a drink and have a good time. Doing this puts themselves and other people in danger.

“If you get behind the wheel when intoxicated it’s like putting a loaded weapon in your hands,” said Coffman. “You are putting someone’s life in your hands. Your career and someone else’s life is not worth it.”

It takes 1.6 seconds for a sober mind to observe, process and react to a situation. Any amount of alcohol in one’s system will at least double the time, according to Coffman.

The Provost Marshal’s Office extends open support to any squadron seeking help with this issue. The accident investigators are available to provide safety briefs and a demonstration of the affects of alcohol on driving ability.

“The programs are an educational tool

we use to make people aware of the dangers and punishments of driving under the influence,” said Capt. Gregg T. Lobato, operations officer, PMO, MCAS Miramar.

Punishments for drunk driving may vary depending on the severity of the incident or at the individual's command discretion.

“I have seen Marines lose their driving privileges for three years, some receive non judicial punishment or even courts-martial,” said Coffman.

The punishment for getting caught in the state of California is severe as well. One year of driving privileges may be lost and total amount of fines, court and attorney fees may exceed \$10,000.

PMO will detain any driver more than 21 years of age who blows more than .08 on a breath test or leaves the impression of intoxication. If a minor is tested with any amount of alcohol in their breath then they will be arrested.

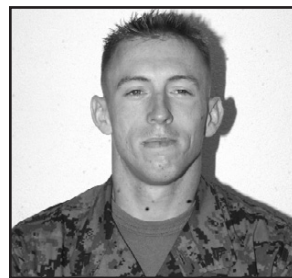
Miramarks

What is one thing you would change about the Marine Corps?



Cpl. Adam V. Quella
Radio operator
MWCS-38

“I would increase the uniform pay. It costs too much to get uniforms tailored.”



Cpl. Jerry J. Bair
Network administrator
MWCS-38

“I would make MOS proficiency more of a factor for promotions.”

Estrada visits Miramar, addresses issues

Story by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps John L. Estrada spoke to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Marines and sailors Wednesday, at the Bob Hope Theater.

The reason for his visit was to personally speak to enlisted Marines and motivate them. He also wanted to let the Marines know what the commandant’s feelings are in these times of war.

“Our first priority that we always work to improve is making sure you Marines have the things you need to fight the war and come home alive,” said Estrada.

Estrada, former sergeant major for 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, spoke on issues concerning single Marines, recruitment and enlistment bonuses.

“What we have done over in the Middle East has been beneficial to the people who live there. Some of you have gone to war and some of you haven’t. Some Military Occupational Specialties cannot be deployed and the Marines in that job field feel cheated,” said Estrada.

“The work you do back here is just as important as what we do there,” said Estrada. “That is how the Marine Corps works, we support each other.”

The sergeant major also touched on how much the infantry Marines appreciate the support from all the other military occupational specialties in the Marine Corps.

The sergeant major of the Marine Corps travels to many Marine Corps bases to talk to enlisted Marines in order to bring issues to the commandant.

“It is important to me to correct or fix problems that Marines have,” said Estrada. “When I leave I hope I helped the commandant with as many issues as I could tend to.”

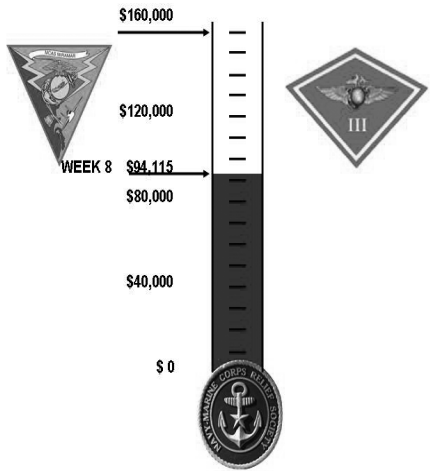
“For someone in my position, they need to realize that they are a connection line between the enlisted Marines and the commandant. We have to work together to continue to defeat our enemies and patch anything between ourselves,” said Estrada.

“I feel very privileged to be serving at this time. I try to stay humble and continue to drive on like any other Marine does. I try and use any opportunity that I have to better what I can in the Corps,” said Estrada. “And I’m proud of that.”



Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps John L. Estrada speaks to enlisted Marines Wednesday, at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar’s Bob Hope Theater. Estrada, former sergeant major for 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, spoke on issues concerning single Marines, recruitment and enlistment bonuses. Photo by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin

2006 Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society Fund Drive
MCAS Miramar/3rd MAW Goal:



See your unit Key-Person today for details on how to contribute!

‘Evil Eyes’ set squadron safety record



Marines with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, march the “Evil Eyes” unit flag April 19 at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, to the commanding officer after successfully completing the squadron’s 70,000th “Class A” mishap-free flight hour. Photo by Lance Cpl. Robert W. Beaver

Story by Lance Cpl. Robert W. Beaver

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

From several Iraq deployments to numerous humanitarian relief operations, nothing has prevented one squadron from writing another chapter within their history.

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, also known as “Evil Eyes,” earned a safety award

April 19 for surpassing 70,000 “Class A” mishap-free flight hours. This award marks a legacy of safe flying during the squadron’s 54-year history.

“It took an enormous amount of hard work, discipline and by-the-book maintenance,” said Lt. Col. Brent S. Willson, commanding officer, HMM-163. “Whatever our nation has asked us to do we have done safely, and that’s really what the mission is at the end of the day.”

The squadron held a formation on the flight line to welcome the return of the CH-46E Sea Knight that would mark the 70,000th “Class A” mishap-free hour. When the helicopter landed and taxied near the formation, the aircrew dismounted and reported the achievement to the MAG-11 commanding officer.

“It’s an honor to be part of the aircrew to do this,” said Capt. Joe Mederos, pilot, HMM-163, and a 27-year-old native of Delano, Calif. “We went out and accomplished our training then came back.”

After the aircrew reported in, John Valovich, a representative from Boeing, presented the squadron with the 70,000-hour plaque.

“This is a positive milestone in the squadron’s history,” said Willson, a New York City native. “Seventy thousand is just a start. Everyday is a new day, and we have to be as professional as we were the day before.”

When the ceremony concluded, the Marines were treated to a piece of cake as part of the celebration for their hard work and dedication.

“I am privileged to accept this award on behalf of the squadron, but it’s not about me, it’s about the Marines in the squadron,” said Willson.

It has been 13 years since the squadron’s last “Class A” mishap. Since then every Marine and sailor within the squadron has contributed to the achievement of the award.

“It took more than just these ‘Evil Eyes’ here today,” concluded Willson. “It took ‘Evil Eyes’ from the last 13 years. Hopefully, with hard work and dedication we can hand this legacy off to future ‘Evil Eyes’.”



John Valovich (center), a representative from Boeing, presents Col. James L. Stalnaker (right), commanding officer, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, a plaque recognizing Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163, for completing 70,000 “Class A” mishap-free flight hours. To the left is HMM-163 commanding officer Lt. Col. Brent S. Willson. Photo by Lance Cpl. Robert W. Beaver

Incident Response Platoon: Ironmen of wing

Story by Lance Cpl. Brandon L. Roach
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

ALASAD, Iraq – Breaking the silence of morning with shouts and orders, Marines with the Incident Response Platoon hurry to get their Humvees geared up with weapons, ammunition and the other needed supplies to complete their newly received mission.

The IRP is a quick-reaction unit with Marine Wing Support Squadron 274, Marine Wing Support Group 37 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

“Our mission is to provide security in support of response and pre-planned missions throughout area of operations,” said 2nd Lt. Charles P. Hunt, IRP platoon commander and ground training officer, MWSS-274. “This provides squadron assets a secure environment while executing outside-the-wire operations.”

IRP is comprised of 40 Marines who come from many different Military Occupational Specialties including communications, motor transportation, crash fire rescue, engineering, mechanics and many more.

Having this job diversity gives the Marines a chance to learn bits and pieces of each MOS with hands-on training from a Marine that has gone to school in that field.

“The IRP is great because we each get to cross train and learn about the other jobs,” said Lance Cpl. Joseph L. Gonzalez, motor vehicle operator, IRP. “It’s good to know about other jobs because it makes you a bigger asset to your own MOS.”

According to Hunt, the Marines went through extensive training prior to being deployed to Iraq. They completed courses such as crew served weapons, tactical convoy, close quarters battle, casualty evacuation and the combat lifesavers course.

“I love learning about all the different weapons systems,” said Lance Cpl. Jessica

Velasco, field wireman, IRP. “Everyone was well trained on each individual weapon.”

Training has been a huge part of life for the Marines, but going along the strict safety guidelines of the Marine Corps is always the most prominent factor for them.

“We are pretty cautious with everything that we do, which has kept injuries to a minimum,” said Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Edison M. Vargas, corpsman, IRP. “Before every mission, the platoon guide checks all the Marines and sailors for all required protective equipment and gear.”

Even with all the gear that the Marines need to carry during missions the unit is set to respond to any call that comes over the radio.

From mounted patrols to escorting

Explosive Ordnance Disposal units, Marines say, every mission is different and exciting.

“I enjoy going outside the wire with the EOD team on demolition blasts,” said Gonzalez. “They are the longest and most uneventful missions, but in the end, the explosion is worth the wait.”

They also handle other incidents that require immediate attention such as downed aircraft, vehicle recovery, security threats that are present around the base, and many others.

Rapid response is a big focus for many of their missions, but the IRP has done several pre-planned missions for several different units that support the military and the people of Iraq.

“Out of all the missions we have done, I

enjoyed going to Baghdadi the most,” said Vargas. “We got to work with the infantry Marines of (3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment) and the Iraqi military as well as meeting many of the local children and seeing how we directly impact their lives.”

During the recent Baghdadi mission, the IRP was dealing directly with the people of Iraq. The platoon escorted members of a Civil Affairs Group and Police Transition Team to the city so they could complete their mission.

The Marines of IRP frequently comment on how they look forward to the days to come. Although they are often outside the perimeter and directly in the face of danger, these ‘Ironmen’ welcome the challenges ahead of them.



2nd Lt. Charles P. Hunt (right), Sgt. David P. D'Andrea (back) and Lance Cpl. Mathew L. Spencer (left), load a recovered inert weapons cache into the back of their Humvee March 17 in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq. Hunt is the platoon commander for the Incident Response Platoon, Marine Wing Support Squadron 37 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. D'Andrea is the platoon sergeant for IRP and Spencer is an aircraft rescue and firefighting specialist attached to the IRP. Photo by Lance Cpl. Brandon L. Roach

‘Heavy Haulers’ prepare for deployment



Three Marines from the 1st Combat Logistics Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton load a 12,500-pound cement block April 19 to the slings from a CH-53E Super Stallion hovering above. Photo by Lance Cpl. George Papastrat

Story by Lance Cpl. George Papastrat
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

A Marine watches three other Marines work underneath the Marine Corps’ heaviest helicopter. Gusts of wind, a loud roar, and a cloud of dust swells as a CH-53E Super Stallion hovers above them.

This is one part of the overall training experience for Marines with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, also known as the “Heavy Haulers.”

The training mission, conducted April 19 at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, used the dual-point system to lift a 12,500-pound cement block and fly in a circular pattern around the training area. The CH-53E is so powerful it can lift another CH-53E.

“We do a lot of training, its very realistic,” said 1st Lt. John R. Ballenger, a pilot with HMH-462. “When we are lifting that kind of weight, it feels like you are driving a truck with a trailer attached to it.”

This type of training in the CH-53E is essential, it is imperative every pilot knows and can perform lifting techniques with the aircraft, such as the dual and single point lifting.

“It’s like everything else, practice makes perfect,” said Lance Cpl. George L. Pinepo, a landing support specialist with the 1st Combat Logistics Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group. Pinepo worked as an outside director during the first few hours of the mission.

The outside director is responsible for relaying the position of the CH-53E to the pilots so that they know their location to where they are above the crew.

These Marines from the helicopter support team train with various helicopter squadrons from Miramar as well as Camp Pendleton to ensure their skills are honed, said Sgt. Shane Cowen, the team leader for the landing support team.

The three Marine team is responsible for connecting the load to the hooks from the helicopter while withstanding the 175-mph rotor wash, which is a powerful gush of winds produced from the spinning blades of the CH-53E. One member is the “static man” who is responsible for grounding the hooks.

The hooks must be grounded because they carry enough static electricity to kill a Marine if they grabbed them.

The two metal hooks hanging from the CH-53E carry anywhere from 100,000 to 200,000 volts of electricity and must be grounded, said Pfc. Devon T. Leachman, a landing support specialist with CLB-1.

The two other Marines under the helicopter are called legmen. They are responsible for ensuring, that the weight connecting slings, are correctly attached to the helicopter.

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continued from page 6

“I love the (Super Stallion),” said Petty Officer 3rd class Victor Perez, a corpsman with HMH-462. “It is one of the best. It can pick up anything.”

Perez is a corpsman who recently

returned from a deployment in Iraq and has completed many missions in the CH-53E.

“This training is very beneficial to the pilots as well as the air and ground crew,” said 1st Lt. Marc W. Brinneman, a pilot with HMH-462. “This is exactly what they do in Iraq.”



A CH-53E from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, hauls a 12,500-pound block during a training exercise at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. Photo by Lance Cpl. George Papastrat



A CH-53E from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, hovers over Marines with 1st Combat Logistics Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, to link up the 12,500-pound cement block they will train with. Photo by Lance Cpl. George Papastrat

Flight planners ensure safe flight for aircrew

Story by Lance Cpl. George Papastrat
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

A Marine standing on the flight line at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar looks into the sky and wonders how can all of these planes fly around in the air and not hit each other?

A Marine flight planner is responsible for monitoring and controlling the incoming and outgoing flights from base aircraft as well as transient aircraft.

“It is our job to ensure the safety of the pilots and their aircraft by making sure there are no conflicting plans as well as safe incoming and outgoing flights,” said Lance Cpl. Kyle Jones, flight planning dispatcher, MCAS Miramar.

“My job is to track incoming and outgoing flights,” said Sgt. Christopher D. Elstun, the flight planning watch supervisor for MCAS Miramar.

“Keeping track of over 500 aircraft, not counting transient, or non-base aircraft, is no easy task.

“Once in a while we get (medical evacuation) flights from Operation Iraqi Freedom with a service member who was wounded in the war,” said Elstun.

Elstun has been doing this job for 4 years and has been working long hours to ensure the safety on the flight line.

“We work directly with the tower to ensure aircraft are arriving and departing on time,” said Jones.

“If we are unable to locate a pilot, we begin search and rescue procedures which include notifying a SAR team,” said Jones.

“We must also keep up flight publications, which are books on the aircraft, especially for transient or non-base aircraft,” said Jones. “It is important to know all the facts about the incoming and outgoing aircraft.”

In the work area, there is a control board where all incoming and outgoing air traffic is logged, said Elstun.

If a pilot and his crew have a flight



Lance Cpl. Kyle Jones, a flight planning dispatcher with Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, checks flights April 20 for the day to make sure all the aircraft arrive and depart at their correct times. Photo by Lance Cpl. George Papastrat

plan, which involves flying near other civilian or military airfields, it is the job of the flight planning team to ensure these airfields are notified.

The flight planners must review the flight plan for pilots to ensure they have correctly filed the paperwork for the day or they will be grounded, said Elstun.

“If a pilot does not file the correct flight plan, he cannot fly,” said Elstun, who also reviews the daily log, which is paperwork filled out by the pilot.

It is important to know where each aircraft is, as well as its scheduled flight plans for the day. This ensures safe arrival and departures of each aircraft leaving the airfield, said Jones.

Padres recognize military during appreciation night



Brig. Gen. John M. Paxton, commanding general, Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, throws the first pitch Saturday to open the Padres military appreciation game at Petco Park. This game marks the 11th consecutive season the Padres have honored service members for their sacrifices and contributions they made for their country. Photo by Lance Cpl. Robert W. Beaver

Story by Lance Cpl. Robert W. Beaver

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Service members have demonstrated selfless sacrifice to their country since before the Revolutionary War. Many have paid the ultimate price for freedom and the American way of life.

The San Diego Padres recognized all service members Saturday in a pregame ceremony during the team's military appreciation game at Petco Park. The game marked the 11th consecutive season the Padres expressed their gratitude to service members for their selfless service.

Several Marines, sailors, soldiers and airmen were recognized during a pregame ceremony but Cpl. Michael Kennedy, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, stood out among the Marines who were recognized.

"I had a lot of family in the military," said Kennedy. "I chose the toughest branch, because I wanted to be among the best."

Kennedy, a Crooksville, Ohio native and a Purple Heart recipient, was on a mission when he was shot in his right forearm by an Iraqi sniper.

The surgery Kennedy received for his wound left a scar that extends from his wrist to his elbow. Due to his injuries, Kennedy is unable to perform his duties and is pending a medical discharge.

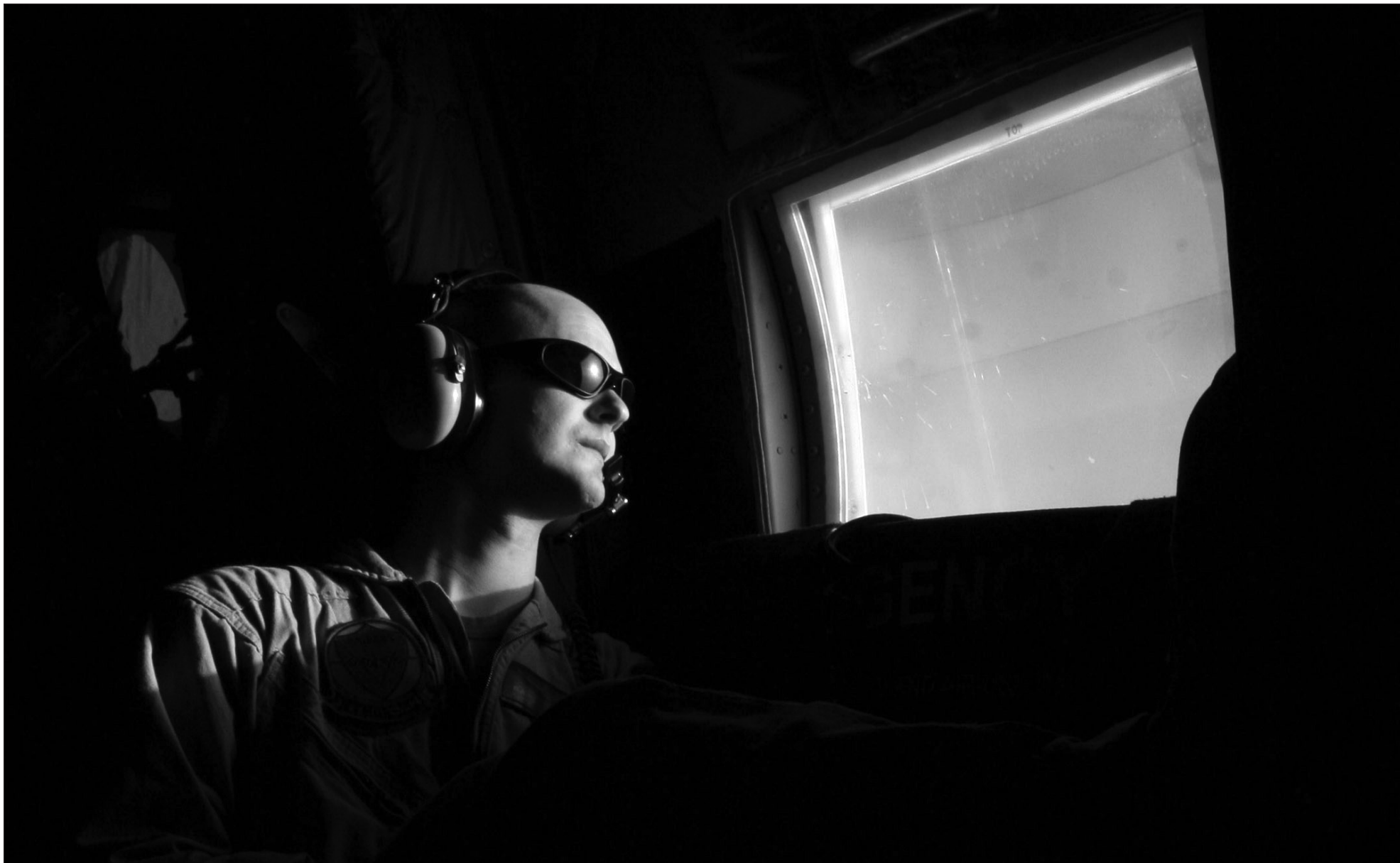
"I plan to go to school this fall and study to be a physical therapist," said Kennedy.

Near the end of the ceremony, Kennedy, accompanied by Brig. Gen. John M. Paxton, commanding general, Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, accepted a \$10,000 dollar check by Marine Corps League San Diego Building Detachment 835 on behalf of the Injured Marine Fund. The fund offers financial assistance to Marines and their families during the event of injury.

"We appreciate what the military does and the sacrifices they make to keep our nation strong and free," said Jack Ensich, director of military marketing with the Padres. "The military is an important part of the San Diego community. They do so much for our country, and this is the one game of the year where we can show them how much we appreciate them."

To show service members their appreciation, the players wore desert camouflage jerseys during the game. This is the seventh time the Padres wore jersey to support service members.

"The fans always wear the players' jerseys," said Ensich, a retired Navy captain. "We respect the military so much that we are going to wear (camouflage jerseys) as a visible way to salute them."



Cpl. Adam Palmer looks out the window of a KC-130J Hercules during an aerial refueling mission March 17, in Iraq. Palmer and other enlisted crewmembers with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadrons 352, Marine Aircraft Group 16 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), are responsible for safely conducting aerial refueling missions throughout Iraq. Palmer is a loadmaster and West Palm Beach, Fla., native. Photo by Cpl. Jonathan K. Teslevich

C-130 enlisted crew mans fuel pump in sky

Story by Cpl. Jonathan K. Teslevich

3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

AL ASAD, Iraq – High above the Iraqi desert, fuel-thirsty jets can stay airborne for hours, in part because of the enlisted Marines manning an orbiting gas station in the sky.

Crew chiefs and aerial observers with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352, Marine Aircraft Group 16 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), are critical to the readiness of Marine aviation in Iraq.

Flying aboard a KC-130J Hercules aircraft laden with thousands of gallons of fuel, the Marines are responsible for the safe and expedient delivery of fuel to F/A-18 Hornets and AV-8B Harrier jets thousands of feet above the desert below.

Marines arrive to their workspace hours ahead of the mission to begin their pre-flight duties before the actual refueling can begin.

“One of us conducts a simple visual inspection of the outside of the aircraft and cargo area while another checks the aircraft systems inside the cockpit,” said Sgt. James C. Curtis, a crew chief and Olympia, Wash., native.

Responsibility for checking on the plane’s flight status lies in their hands, but the modest Marines give the credit to the mechanics in the squadron for the Hercules being in tip-top shape.

“The maintainers do all the work, we’re

just the last ones to check on the plane,” said Cpl. Robert C. Lynall, crew chief and Peoria, Ill., native. “They get no glory, but when there’s a problem, we simply tell them and they take care of it.”

With a Hercules topped off with fuel, three enlisted crew members, two crew chiefs and a loadmaster, are joined by the two pilots for their multiple-hour flight.

“Once we take off, we’re the eyes of the pilots for everything to the rear of the cockpit,” said Cpl. Adam Palmer, a loadmaster and West Palm Beach, Fla., native. “We’re always on the lookout for any threats to the aircraft, ready to trigger the countermeasures and instruct the pilots to maneuver.”

After ascending to a set altitude, the Hercules cruises through the sky, waiting for the jets to pull in for an aerial refueling.

The pilots and crew keep in constant communication during the aerial refueling process, making it a complete team effort.

There are two major concerns during aerial refueling: a hose breaking and “swapping paint,” meaning a collision. According to Lynall, preventing the damage caused in either case is a good example of how they work together during aerial refueling.

“I run the aerial refueling panel in the cockpit, monitoring the flow of fuel to the jet linked to us,” said Lynall. “If one of the guys in the back calls out that the hose



An F/A-18 Hornet receives fuel from a KC-130J Hercules through a hose during an aerial refueling mission March 17 high above Iraq. The enlisted crewmembers with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352, Marine Aircraft Group 16 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), are responsible for safely conducting aerial refueling missions throughout Iraq. Photo by Cpl. Jonathan K. Teslevich

broke, then I immediately shut off the fuel flow and our pilots relay the message to the jet pilot telling him to break away immediately.”

Instances of these emergency procedures are rare, but the crew is always ready, commented Palmer.

“Our mission is fairly routine, mainly aerial refueling and a little cargo transport. The toughest thing is probably the sched-

ule,” said Palmer. “We work 12 to 14-hour shifts, but the show times can be day or night depending on when people need us.”

Despite the long, changing hours and a mission that is seemingly routine, the enlisted crew revels in their duties.

“This job kicks butt! There’s always something different, like the weather, when we go up,” said Lynall. “We’re not over tasked, but we are definitely busy.”



Is this your Eclipse?

The above vehicle has been marked for impound by the Provost Marshal’s Office. To avoid having the vehicle towed, please store it in the Marine Corps Community Services or Traffic Management Office lots. Abandoned vehicles at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar present security risks as well as enviromental and safety concerns. PMS attempts to identify and contact vehicle owners of illegally parked, abandoned vehicles prior to tagging the vehicle with a Department of Defense notice. Vehicles are then scheduled for towing three days following the notice. For more information, call 577-1276/4139.

The following vehicles have been impounded and need to be claimed by the owners. Towing fees average \$113, storage fees \$28 daily. For more information call 577-1461.

Vehicle:	License:
Mitsubishi Eclipse	CA#5DAX061
Honda CX	CA#5ERW727
Suzuki GSXR	CA#17E7224
Ford E350	CA#4LNX778
Motorcycle Trailor	VA#CT497383

Miramar Movies

The Bob Hope Theater is located in Building 2242, and will be featuring the following movies. Outside food and drinks are not permitted. For more information, call 577-4143 or log on to *www.mccsmiramar.com*.

Friday:
6:30 p.m. The Shaggy Dog (PG)
9:00 p.m. *Ultraviolet (PG-13)

Saturday:
6:30 p.m. Aquamarine (PG-13)
9:00 p.m. Failure to Launch (PG-13)

Sunday:
1:00 p.m. Failure to Launch (PG-13)
6:30 p.m. *Madea’s Family Reunion (PG-13)

Wednesday:
6:30 p.m. V For Vendetta (R)

Thursday:
2:00 p.m. The Shaggy Dog (PG)
6:30 p.m. The Hills Have Eyes (R)

* Indicates the last showing for that film.

Mom or Dad Deployed?

The Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Youth and Teen Center is hosting a gathering for children of deployed Marines and sailors every first and third Monday of each month.

Children ages 8 to 10 meet from 3:30 to 4:15 p.m., ages 11 to 13 meet from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. For more information, call 577-1322.

Religious Services

The Chaplain’s Office is located in Building 5632 and coordinates regularly-scheduled worship services. For the location and meeting schedules of religious activities, contact the Chaplain’s Office at 577-1333.

Sunday:
9:30 a.m. Protestant worship service
11 a.m. Roman Catholic Eucharist
Wednesday:
7 p.m. Baptist service
Monday-Friday:
11:30 a.m. Roman Catholic daily mass
Jewish:
7 p.m. First Friday of the month MCRD
7:30 p.m. Last Friday at Edson Range Chapel

APES and Promotions Briefs

An Automated Performance Evaluation System brief will be held May 10 at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar’s Bob Hope Theater.

The promotions briefs will be held May 15 also at the theater. Officer briefs will be at 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Enlisted briefs will be at 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. For more information, call (858) 577-4920.

Force Recon Screening

Force Reconnaissance screening is now available for sergeants and below.

The Marine must have a GT score of 105, a first class physical fitness test and a first class swin qualification. Some requirements may be waiverable.

For more information, call (760) 725-2126.

Fire Station triumphs over PMO

The Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Fire Department defeated the Provost Marshal’s office April 21 during the annual “Guns and Hoses” softball game at Mills Park.

The game originated in 2004 to enhance camraderie between both organizations, as they work together as part of the air station’s security force.